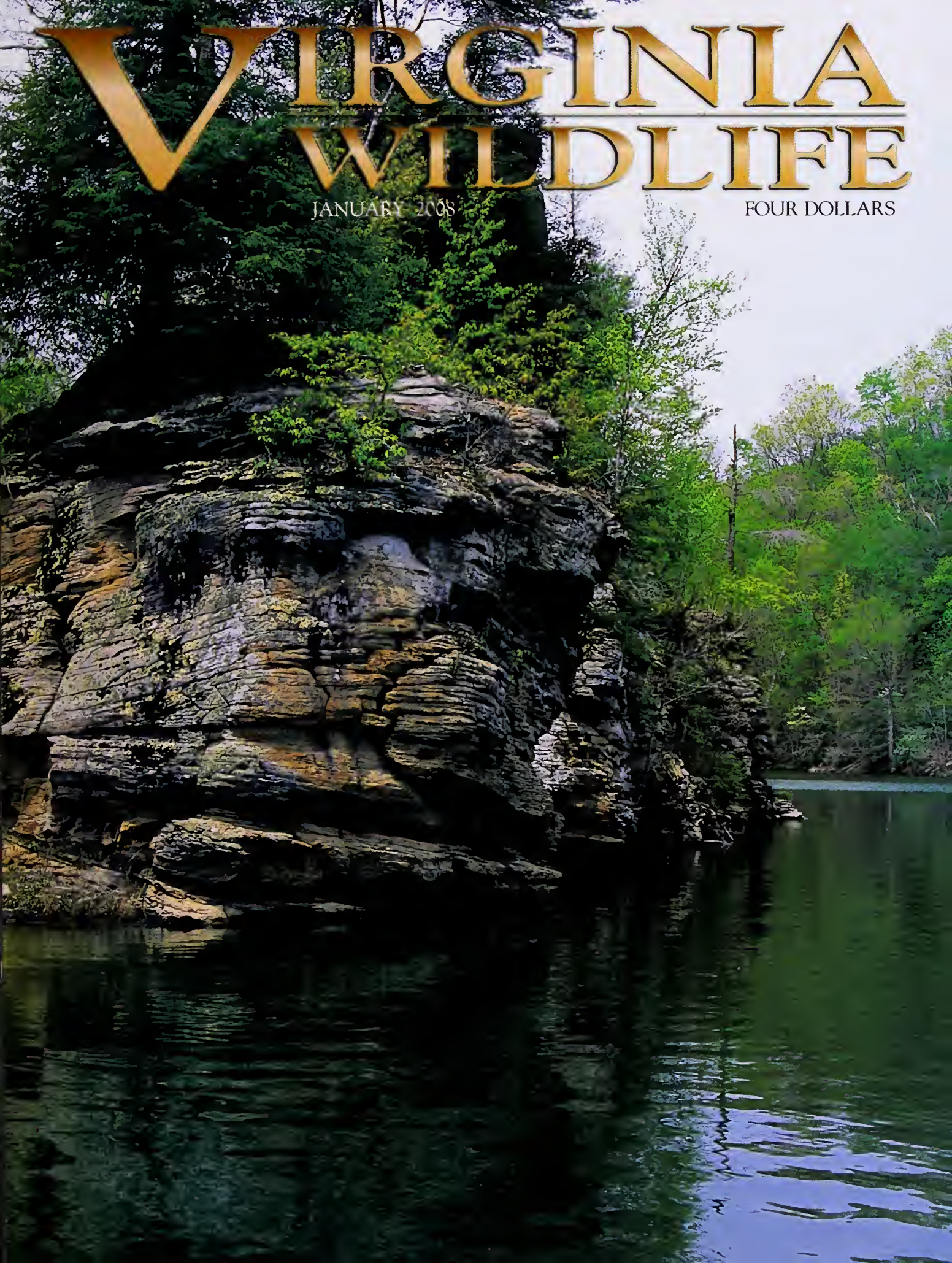


VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

JANUARY 2008

FOUR DOLLARS





G. Michael Bise
Acting Director



As we begin 2008, we are pleased to announce that the Powhatan Lakes have been rebuilt and are filling up nicely. Improvements to the lakes, located on our Powhatan Wildlife Management Area, include handicapped accessible fishing piers and courtesy docks. Future plans include hiking trails, watchable wildlife viewing platforms, and information and interpretive kiosks.

It is the intent of the Department to bring the lakes back to their reputation as one of the region's most popular fishing destinations. Our Fisheries Division personnel will be restocking the lakes with popular game species. It will take a couple of years for the fish to reach maturity and offer anglers the opportunity to enjoy a quality fishing experience.

We'd like to recognize and thank Southside Electric Cooperative for donating a work crew for more than a week and the use of their specialized company equipment for the installation of the pilings for these amenities.

Without their support we would not have been able to take advantage of the reduced cost of construction in the dry lake bed.

It is this kind of generous support that maximizes the Department's investment in outdoor recreation. Creating accessibility to these lakes will change the lives of many Virginians, giving them greater opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. This type of partnership is essential as we look toward the future and the work that will need to be done to meet the growing demand on our facilities and resources.

Come out and visit the site. Maps and directions are available on our Web site at HuntFishVA.com. We also have information about our other Wildlife Management Areas and public fishing lakes. If you would like to learn more about opportunities to support these facilities or any Department programs, contact us.



Work on the Powhatan Lakes dams began in spring 2007. During the summer months, construction of the piers and docks began. With rains in the fall the lakes began to refill.

Mission Statement

To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.

Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

Commonwealth of Virginia
Timothy M. Kaine, Governor

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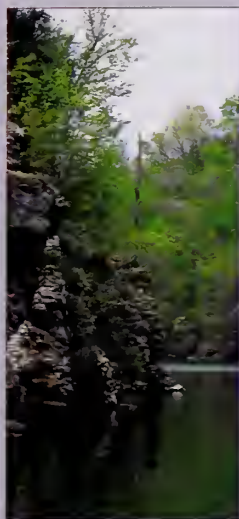
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JANUARY CONTENTS



About the cover: John W. Flannagan Reservoir is a 1,143-acre impoundment located in Dickenson County. The reservoir was built to provide flood control, pollution abatement, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities.

Fifty miles of beautiful shoreline consisting of mature hardwood forest interspersed with spectacular rock bluffs surround this deep, clear reservoir.

Flannagan is home to a variety of sportfish species. For more information on Flannagan Reservoir visit the Department's Web site.

©Dwight Dyke

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

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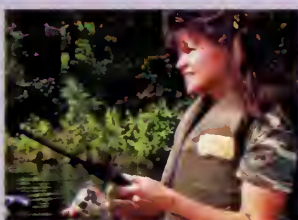
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The Art of Deco



story by Tee Clarkson
photos by Dwight Dyke

For Bill Grossman carving custom lures and fish decoys has not only improved his angling success, but helped to revive a lost art form.

The first thing I noticed upon entering the Grossman's home, outside of the giant white cockatoo's piercing squawk, was the number of lures, and lures and more lures. Cases of them on the walls, boxes of them on tables. I thought to myself, this guy couldn't have made all of these, and

certainly not all the fish decoys. The shelves and bookcases are covered with sturgeon, brook trout, browns and bluegill, full size carvings elaborately painted.

When I asked Bill where he got all the fish decoys and hand carved lures, I expected to hear that he had been collecting them his whole life, certainly not that he had made each one himself over the course of the last decade.

ception

Bill Grossman hails from the Bronx. I'm not one to pinpoint an accent, but it was evident he didn't grow up here on Swift Creek Reservoir in Chesterfield County, just south of Richmond. Bill, who is 57 years old, moved to Richmond with his wife and three children two-and-a-half years ago following a 32 year career teaching art in New York City's public school system.

Slowly we moved from the foyer to the study, where Bill showed me more fish decoys: peacock bass, pike, and perch, and still more lures. Above the desk, dozens of ribbons celebrate his achievements over the years in Fish Decoy World Championships, sponsored by the Great Lakes Fish Decoy Club of Michigan. Bill has never won the overall prize, but he has taken home several best-in-shows as evidenced by the blue ribbons scattered amongst the bunch.

Bill's wife still works and his children are in school and living at home. Bill has all day to carve lures and make fish decoys.

Eagerly Bill led me upstairs to his work room: more lures and more fish decoys, mostly sturgeon. Bill prefers carving sturgeon decoys because the bodies are so interesting and different. He refers to them as the "sages of the lake." Sensing my astonishment at the sheer volume of what I was looking at he quickly joked, "It's a sickness," and laughed. Impressive, I thought. Bill builds all his lures, decoys and jigging sticks from hardwoods: mahogany, walnut, maple and



Bill Grossman uses only the finest of hardwoods for his carvings: mahogany, walnut, maple and cherry. He spends hours upon hours sitting at his workstation shaping the wood into realistic fish decoys and lures.

cherry. He has boxes of handmade frogs, crankbaits, stickbaits, topwater plugs and giant muskie lures in every color imaginable (even patriotic red, white and blue), no two alike.

Just over ten years ago, Bill, always an artist first, had been "lost" and "fumbling around" as far as his artistic direction was concerned. Finally, he found himself at a fishing show, speaking with a gentleman who had brought some of his handmade lures to display. Bill, already an





with equipment. As a general rule, Bill retires any lure after it has caught four fish. He has a lot of retired lures.

avid fisherman, had stumbled upon his direction. The rest as they say is history. Bill makes "a little of everything" as he puts it, from lures, to jigging sticks, to fish decoys. He tinkers with more conventional tackle as well, recently finishing a close second in a club tournament with a deadly rubber worm rig he invented—one I had to promise never to reveal to the public, even under the cruelest form of torture. He continues to do different stuff, always staying modern

At first the concept of the fish decoy confused me. I was also a little unclear about the elaborate jigging sticks I noticed around the room, pieces of wood carved into ornate fish with strings hanging from them. In fact, I did not have the slightest clue what a jigging stick was. When I asked, Bill explained the phenomenon of ice fishing in the North. Giant cities of ice-fishing shacks form on the lakes once they freeze over in the winter. People come in hordes, bringing generators and televisions, grills and snowmobiles. The jigging stick and fish decoy are ancient tools used to attract fish close enough to where the fisherman can spear them through a

Eventually, after I had dug through several boxes of lures, eyeing several of my favorites, Bill and I headed down to Swift Creek Reservoir to do some fishing. With the summer's severe drought, the lake was down 3 to 4 feet. The air temperature was in the mid-80s and it was October. The fishing would be tough. And while I would like to recount stories of lunker bass jumping into the boat to eat Bill's beautiful, hand-carved lures right out of the tackle box, the truth is that the fish simply were not biting. They were not biting Bill's lures, or anything else for that matter. We spent two hours on the water, emptying our tackle boxes in an effort just to get a single bite. It just was not happening. We were both a little disheartened with the fishing, but glad to be out on the water none-the-less. I always enjoy fishing with someone for the first time, and Bill was no excep-



hole cut in the ice's surface. The fish decoy is attached by a string to the jigging stick and one angler works the stick, causing the decoy to dart back and forth as if it were injured, luring large game fish like pike, muskie and lake trout up from the depths and within range of a second angler who stands ready with a spear. It sounded pretty cool.

Bill has been an artist his whole life, but it was only 10 years ago that he discovered his passion lay in fashioning lures and decoys from wood. He stays on top of modern trends and constantly alters his tactics as new technology and equipment appear on the market.

tion. From his stories of building hand-made rods with his art students in the Bronx to tales of 12-pound bass he has caught on his secret worm rig, there was never a dull moment in the boat.

Bill still tinkers with the idea of getting back into the working world, but for now he is content to carve his lures and decoys. From time to time he sets up booths at fishing and art shows, and sells some lures on his Web site, but he will tell you he certainly doesn't do it for the money.

"It's my art form," he says, "I do it mainly for me. The real reward is catching a fish on a lure you have made." To check out Bill's lures and decoys go to: www.swiftcreeklures.com. □

Tee Clarkson is an English teacher at Deep Run High School in Henrico County. In the summer he runs Virginia Fishing Adventures, a fishing camp for kids. Contact him at: tsclarkson@virginiafishingadventures.com. Tee is also a member of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc.



This elaborate jigging stick won a prize at the Fish Decoy World Championships held each year in Michigan and sponsored by the Great Lakes Fish Decoy Club. Bill has won numerous honors at the championships over the years.

ABOVE THE



LAW?

Federal and state law enforcement officers join forces to stop a multi-state wildlife poaching operation.

by Virginia Shepherd

The 2007-2008 hunting season will go down as a red-letter year for the big-game record books—but not because of the number of world-record bucks taken. Instead, the news is about the dozens of trophy animals that have not been taken as the result of the conclusion of a three-year investigation by state and federal wildlife law enforcement officers in Virginia and New Mexico.

It started off as a tip to Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) Conservation Police Officer Bruce Lemmert in 2003. An informant passed on information about an illegal guiding operation based in Virginia which guaranteed hunters trophy elk in New Mexico. Lemmert followed up with a call to law enforcement officers at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

They confirmed his worst fears. Headless elk carcasses had been found left to rot in the federally-owned

89,000-acre Valles Caldera National Preserve in the Jemez Mountain Range in north-central New Mexico. The story Lemmert began to unravel was one of “crass trophyism,” revolving around a group of individuals for whom he soon realized “laws meant nothing.”

The illegal business had been set up by Jeff Clem, a guide with MarkV. Outfitters in New Mexico. Partnering with an old business associate, Wesley McGlothlin of Antler Ridge Taxidermy in Amissville, Va., the pair worked to line up clients willing to “hunt-and-run” for trophy animals in New Mexico. For around \$2500, Clem would “guide” individuals onto protected public lands to kill trophy elk, mule deer, antelope, cougar, black bear, oryx and other big-game animals. The illegal “hunts” were designed to shoot animals quickly—preferably from a truck or not far from it. No difficult-to-obtain licenses were required. A trophy for the wall was guaranteed.

Within an hour, it was all over. A rack of trophy antlers was cut from the carcass and safely stowed in the back of the truck to be shipped back to Virginia at a later date. Sometimes, a collection of severed heads was hidden in the mountains to be picked up later that night. The meat was left behind to rot in the woods. “This was ego gone out of control,” says Lemmert. “This was a case of conscious and continuous violation that had to be stopped.”

THE LACEY ACT

In 1900, Iowa Congressman John Lacey introduced one of the first pieces of federal wildlife legislation in this country designed to supplement state laws for the protection of game and birds. At that time, it was common for market hunters to fraudulently mis-mark illegally taken game in one state and ship it for sale in another. Once the game left its borders, the state where the violation occurred lacked the jurisdiction necessary to prosecute, while the state receiving the illegal wildlife was often unable to prohibit its sale. The Lacey Act fixed all of that, criminalizing both the shipment and the delivery of “wild animals or birds” killed in violation of state law.

Though it was originally designed to target game poaching and wildlife “laundering” across state lines, over the years amendments to the legislation have broadened its scope and effectiveness to address illegal wildlife trafficking—not only within this country—but globally as well. Today, the Lacey Act occupies a central position within the wildlife conservation legal framework. It covers a wider array of wildlife, fish and plants than does any other single wildlife protection law. It provides for a longer potential term of incarceration than do most other wildlife laws containing felony provisions, and it includes a broader scope of violations than most other wildlife laws.

More than 100 years after its enactment, the Lacey Act is the country's oldest national wildlife protection statute. It remains one of the most potent weapons available in the fight to stop the illegal cross-border trafficking in wildlife.

For more information:

<http://www.animallaw.info/articles/ovuslaceyact.htm>

But putting an end to this kind of operation is not as easy as it sounds. Lemmert had enough evidence to charge the men involved in the operation under Virginia law with a Class 3 misdemeanor for unlawful possession of wildlife killed in another state. But the real violation to wildlife was occurring in New Mexico, and Virginia's maximum penalty of \$500 plus the loss of the antlers for such a crime simply wasn't enough. The stakes needed to be higher than those found on the books in either Virginia or in New Mexico to reflect the enormity of the violation.

Enter the federal Lacey Act. In 1900, legislation was introduced by Iowa Congressman John Lacey to control market hunting by criminalizing the shipment of illegally killed wildlife across state lines. With a maximum misdemeanor penalty of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year, and a maximum felony penalty of \$250,000 and five years in jail, the Virginia/New Mexico elk investigation was about to receive the attention it deserved.

"This was a federal case," says U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Special Agent Al Hundley who worked in tandem with Lemmert on the case. "It's why the Lacey Act exists." With its new designation as a multi-state, federal investigation, the complexion of the case changed, bringing with it increased levels of support, commitment and cooperation between state and federal law enforcement officers in Virginia and New Mexico.

The case also became vastly more complicated. For the next three years, Lemmert, Hundley and their state and federal counterparts in New Mexico, including New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Investigator Jim Comins and USFWS Special Agent Brian Lakes, worked diligently to piece together hundreds of details to make a case that would stand up in court. Plans were made for a federal undercover agent to infiltrate the operation and participate in an illegal hunt. Modern CSI techniques were used to match the DNA from antlers to carcasses. Cancelled checks, AT&T phone records, and airline ticket receipts were all combed through for clues and the evidence necessary to document and reveal a deliberate and ongoing violation of wildlife resources across state lines. Says Comins, "Every officer working on this case was essential. We couldn't have put it all together without every single one of them."

At zero hour on December 15, 2004, a carefully orchestrated takedown was launched simultaneously in Virginia and New Mexico, involving more than 100 law enforcement officers from six different state and federal agencies. "By this time," says DGIF Conservation Police Officer Gary Shaw, who took part in the takedown, "we knew more from our investigative efforts about the illegal hunts than the violators themselves remembered." More than 50 interviews were conducted during the takedown, and 100 federal reports were filed on the case.

It would take another year to compile the interviews, follow up on the leads, confiscate the evidence and develop the case necessary to secure successful prosecution of 21 individuals on both felony and misdemeanor charges in state and federal courts. During that time, some surprising evidence was uncovered. "One subject of this investigation maintained a diary dating back over 20 years in which he recorded his illegal activities," says Hundley. "This diary is an eye-opening read. It reveals the blatant disregard for wildlife laws by an entire culture. This individual and most of his friends had absolutely no regard for wildlife laws and rarely did a day go by that they didn't violate multiple game laws."

Nevertheless, the state and federal wildlife law enforcement officers working on this case knew they could not afford to make a single slip in order to make their case stick. The complexity of the legal system coupled with the ability of present-day wildlife violators to secure representation by high-profile attorneys meant the case demanded the highest level of sophistication and investigative skills. "We needed credible evidence," says Shaw. "We needed to be able to put this complex case together in an articulate manner that could be

A three-year multi-state investigation by wildlife law enforcement officers into the illegal guiding operation for trophy game animals began with a single tip to Virginia Conservation Police Officer Bruce Lemmert in 2003.





The cooperation and the dedication between law enforcement officers in both Virginia and New Mexico helped to highlight the need for stiffer penalties for the illegal killing of wildlife.

understood in court." USFWS Resident Agent-in-Charge (and former DGIF Conservation Police Officer) Rick Perry agrees. "The case had to be air-tight. There was no wiggle room."

The hard work paid off. In 2007, federal and state courts in Virginia and New Mexico handed down sentences to the 21 violators, adding up to a total of 36 months imprisonment, 42 years of probation, 10 felony convictions, the forfeiture of 80 wildlife trophies, one truck, seven guns, leg-hold traps, and more than \$100,000 in restitution and fines. The charges included violations of New Mexico hunting laws, the federal Lacey Act, false statements, felon in possession of firearms, taxidermy permit regulations, cruelty to animals violations, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and Conspiracy to violate the Lacey Act.

"These guys were major violators," reflects Lemmert on the successful outcome of the investigation. "And there's no better feeling than to know you've intervened into an operation that has absolutely no respect for wildlife and no respect for other sportsmen. These guys got jail time, paid fines, and restitution. They lost property and received felony convictions which will restrict their rights and prevent them from legally hunting with firearms for the rest of their lives."

This successful effort to shut down illegal guiding, outfitting and hunting and trafficking in wildlife has been applauded by the public and sportsmen alike. It also helped fuel legislative efforts by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to increase their civil penalties for poaching trophy animals. Today, the maximum civil penalty for the illegal killing of trophy animals including bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope and elk in New Mexico, has doubled to \$10,000 per animal.

There's no doubt that ethical sportsmen and women across the country cringe to hear of horrific violations to our wildlife resources. "It's a shame that you have to bring this kind of thing to light," says Perry. "But it has to be done. This case does not reflect the actions of sportsmen across the U.S. These men were not 'hunters' at all. They were killers. What these men were doing gave all sportsmen a black eye, and it needed to be stopped."

Tom Smith, Special Prosecutor in Culpeper County for the case, agrees. "There are those who think they are above the law and everyone else. People either think they are so smart that they will never get caught or they just don't care. People like this are always going to be a problem, and the question for the general public is: "How will we deal with them?" □

Virginia Shepherd is a former editor of Virginia Wildlife magazine. She has been a freelance writer and editor for the past 12 years.

VIOLATORS CHARGED AND SENTENCED IN CONNECTION WITH THE VIRGINIA/NEW MEXICO ILLEGAL GUIDING OPERATION INVESTIGATION

Virginia:

Colin Clem, Linden
Shawn Hamrick, Huntly
Mike Johnson, Fredericksburg
Jamie Garrison, Culpeper
Kevin Stringfellow, Culpeper
Brandon Ellison, Aldie
Chris Wolfe, Aldie
Richard Wolfe, Aldie
Jessie Stringfellow, The Plains
Brett Boyce, Amissville
Robert Brooks, Manassas

New Mexico:

Jeff Clem
Mark Martinez
Rudy Valdez
Vernon McCall
Mike Archuleta

RESTITUTION PAYMENTS

The restitution payments resulting from this case have been earmarked for the A. Willis Robertson Conservation Legacy Project. This project is an ongoing effort dedicated to highlighting former DGIF Commissioner A. Willis Robertson's inestimable contribution to the development of a national wildlife policy. Best-known as the co-sponsor of the most important piece of wildlife policy ever enacted in this country, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) Act of 1937, Robertson served as head of DGIF from 1926-1932, practiced law as a Commonwealth's Attorney for Rockbridge County, served as a member of the Virginia Senate, and was elected to both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

The A. Willis Robertson Conservation Legacy Project aims to create an online keyword-searchable electronic library of the more than 25,000 pieces of correspondence written during Robertson's tenure as Commissioner of DGIF and mine the far-reaching educational opportunities of the collection.

Virginia
Naturally

KIDS AGAINST

"It's really important to reuse, recycle and reduce...you can help everyone and even yourself. Don't forget to use the three Rs. Your school can help, too."

Conner, Saltville Elementary School

dents stepped into leadership positions in the community's efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle—stands as a watershed moment in the school's history.

As is the case in so many good schools across America, programs that make a difference are started by strong teachers like Jody Arnold and Janice Phillips; teachers who recognize their students' potential to become leaders in their community. When asked for specifics about the



story and photos by Gail Brown

You have a sense of home when you visit Smyth County's Saltville Elementary School. It's not just the friendly smiles from children and adults, but more the feeling that everyone is on the same page, knowing what jobs

are on hand for the day and just who is doing what. Camaraderie, like the aroma of warm bread on a cold day, is everywhere.

It's often impossible to determine how and when perceptions develop—but certainly the events of 1995, the year Saltville's **Kids Against Trash** began—the year stu-

Left: Saltville participates in World Water Monitoring Day. Kids can run to the site on the North Fork of the Holston River.

Above: Everyone loves Toucan Max—The Bird Against Trash.

TRASH



Above: Murals of Virginia's history make hallways learning centers. Artist Walter Surber explains the scene.



Above: The Gardening Club makes bird-feeders by reusing household materials.

home in keeping our town litter free. And little by little things happened."

"We started small," Phillips continued, "each child recycling maybe 30 aluminum cans a month. But the idea caught on and soon students were recycling more and more. In celebration of their success, a party was held each month to recognize students who accomplished their goals. Now Saltville's students work to become members of the 1,000 Club, a program that recognizes students who have recycled 1,000 or more aluminum cans a year. As Savannah states, "Recycling is important because it helps the earth and it's fun. You can do it every day. You even can do it everywhere, too."

With support like that, no wonder **Kids Against Trash** continues to thrive in this little town in Virginia's beautiful Appalachian Mountains.

Right: Just take a quick sip. Someone's watching you!

Soon, in addition to paper and cans, the students were recycling pop-tops for the Ronald McDonald House and, most recently, 20-oz. plastic bottles for reuse as containers for plant food. Students also reuse materials to make birdhouses, containers for plants, and even quilts. Credit is always given to the school's custodians for their support of these important environmental projects. Mr. Walter Surber, custodian, artist and hunter, whittles quill pens from turkey feathers for students to use in art classes; he also paints scenes of the area's natural resources, animals and history on the hallway walls.

Kids in Saltville, like kids everywhere, know how to have fun, and when their contest for a mascot brought them Toucan Max—*Two Can Do It Better Than One*—they found a lively cheerleader for their recycling activities at school and in the community. Toucan Max even threw the first pitch in a Little League game to en-



courage everyone attending to help the town have litter-free ball games.

In addition to meeting goals at school, the students participate in community events such as Town and County Clean-up Days and the Adopt-A-Spot program. Their contribution to help keep the Saltville Wellfields litter free helps them achieve their goal of global stewardship. Because the land has huge salt and gypsum deposits, the water (a wetland) is brackish and supports plant life seen in coastal communities. Migrating birds depend on this area for food and Saltville's students are working to make sure the birds have a safe migration.

While keeping the Saltville Wellfields healthy supports wildlife today, archeological excavations in the fields have produced fossils from bones of Ice Age creatures, such as the mastodon, woolly mammoth and musk ox. They, too, were drawn to



Above: Students create butterfly habitats, maintain the gardens, and harvest seeds for future plantings.



Above: Reynolds Recycling and the Can Manufacturing Institute both recognized Saltville's recycling efforts. Right: The Art Club reuses fabric to make quilts.

facilitate opportunities for the students to participate in the Museum's Kids' Dig each summer. Their environmental stewardship activities have an additional historic component as the students learn about the Native Americans that lived in the area over 10,000 years ago. They also learn how important Saltville was during the Civil War period as people depended on salt for munitions and to preserve food.

Saltville Elementary School is seen as a leader in environmental education, not just because **Keep America Beautiful** recognized **Kids Against Trash** with a first place award three years in a row (they also won Keep Virginia Beautiful recogni-

tion), and it's not even because the 2000 General Assembly passed Joint Resolution 361 recognizing the school's efforts. Smyth County's Saltville Elementary is a leader in environmental awareness because, when you ask the kids how they feel about working to protect the environment, without hesitation you hear comments like Connor's: "It's really important to reuse, recycle and reduce...you can help everyone and even yourself. Don't forget to use the

the area thousands of years ago because of the salt deposits. Realizing that appreciating our natural resources today depends in large part on understanding our history, staff members, led by teacher Mildred Surber, work closely with the Museum of the Middle Appalachians (located in Saltville) to





Above: Principal Boone (front, 2nd from right), teachers and students all work together to help the environment.

FIVE RECYCLING FACTS KIDS AGAINST TRASH WANT YOU TO KNOW

1. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV for 3 hours (the equivalent of a $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of gas) and there is no limit as to how many times a can can be recycled.
2. For every ton of glass recycled, we save 9 gallons of oil.
3. The average American uses 650 pounds of paper per year.
4. It takes 17 trees to make one ton of paper.
5. In a lifetime, the average American throws away 600 times their adult weight in garbage.

Top right: Tabs are collected for the Ronald McDonald House.

Bottom right: It's creative and fun to reuse materials to make crafts.



three Rs. Your school can help, too."

And then Dalton's heartfelt thought: "Recycling is important because you can save trees, animals and make the world a better place."

Principal Brenda Boone is clearly proud of all the school has accomplished. "We all work together to reuse or recycle everything we possible can. We have a retired teacher, Esther Clear, who leads a craft club that uses only reused items. I like to tease her by saying we've even recycled her! Here, have a seat. Stay a while. We'll show you how to help the environment, too." We believe her. □

Gail Brown is a retired principal for Chesterfield County Public Schools. She is a lifelong learner and educator, and her teaching and administrative experiences in grades K-12 have taught her that project-based environmental programs teach science standards, promote core values and provide exciting educational experiences for the entire community.

Southside Virginia

*Where outdoor
opportunities
are as rich as the soil.*



Meet Virginia



main here, perhaps not as strong as they once were, but hanging on for all they are worth. Fathers and sons still rise early to meet opening day of deer season. They still chase what remain of the elusive, wild bobwhite quail and search the sky, hunkered down in cornfields, for incoming geese. Families still paddle rivers like the Staunton and Nottoway, casting old favorites like Mepps in-line spinners and floating Rapalas from canoes for healthy, timeless bronzebacks.

Hunters looking for good public places to hunt in Southside Virginia will find a wealth of opportunities including places like Dick Cross, Briery Creek, Featherfin, Horsepen Lake and James River Wildlife Management Areas, several state parks and state forests.

Exactly which portions of the state constitute Southside Virginia may be rather vague, but for the most part if one were to draw a line from east to west across the middle of the state, everything under that line is Southside Virginia. Roughly.

The public attractions in this vast area are too many to name them all. A few include Lake Gaston and Briery Creek Lake, both offering excellent freshwater angling opportunities. Horsepen Lake WMA is located just about in the geographic center of Virginia and encompasses 2,910 acres of hardwood and pine forests, rolling hills, bottom lands and beaver ponds. Horsepen contains an 18-acre stocked fishing lake. Hunting opportunities abound for deer, turkey, dove, quail and other species.

story by Megan Mckinley
photos by Dwight Dyke

ast cotton fields and lush, floppy tobacco leaves still speak to the old ways across much of Southside Virginia. And while some ideologies are better left as fading memories of a rather dark past associated with these two crops, the plants themselves still serve to remind us of a lifestyle not all bad. Leaning farmhouses and rotting barns honor a time when family ruled, when dinner was served nightly around a large wooden table without any interruptions, without dad being out of town on business, mom surfing the internet, or kids partnering on video games with virtual friends 3,000 miles away.

Certainly there comes a time when some old ways should come to an end. Hopefully, for the ways of Southside Virginia, that day still resides somewhere, if at all, in a distant, hypothetical future. Traditions, like the cotton and tobacco fields, still re-



One of the first things that people notice when driving through or visiting Southside Virginia is the areas reliance on agriculture. Once known for its vast fields of tobacco, farms are now relying more on crops like cotton and soybeans.

Lake Gaston and Buggs Island Lake are Southside Virginia's fishing hot spots. For the small water angler the area offers slow moving streams and rivers, along with smaller bodies of water, such as Lake Conner, home of the state record largemouth bass.

Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest provides hiking, horseback riding, hunting and fishing throughout its vast 19,355 acre setting. Holiday Lake State Park, located within the Forest, provides camping and great angling opportunities on a 150 acre lake. There are literally thousands of miles of rivers and thousands of acres to explore in Southside Virginia.

Change is inevitable, that much we can be sure of. The wild landscape in Southside Virginia will not be immune to change. As we grow the wildness will shrink, but we can only hope many of its traditions remain steadfast and resolute in the face of an uncertain future. We can only hope that when we are gone and replaced by our children, and they are

replaced by their children and so on down the line, that Southside Virginia will forever remain a safe haven for the things many of us hold so dear. That for generations to come fathers and sons will rise early to meet the opening of deer season and families will marvel at the wonder of a smallmouth cartwheeling through a cool, October afternoon in an effort to

free itself from a floating Rapala. We can only hope, then, at the end of the day, they will gather again around a large wooden table to eat together. We can only hope. □

Megan Mckinley works as Director of Development for Blue Sky Fund (blueskyfund.org), a foundation dedicated to providing outdoor opportunities for inner-city kids.



To Learn More

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
www.HuntFishVA.com

Department of Conservation Recreation
www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/index.shtml

Department of Forestry
www.dof.virginia.gov/stforest/index.shtml

Virginia Tourism
www.virginia.org



Go West Young Man- Far West

by Bruce Ingram

Anglers living in Northern Virginia could drive quicker to New York City than they could to the far Southwest Virginia's Flannagan Reservoir—and the same would hold true for many folks that live in Tidewater. The 1,143-acre impoundment, situated in Dickenson County near the Kentucky line, is one of those places that might fit the old saying that “you can’t get there from here.”

Yet, if anglers took the attitude that Flannagan is too far flung to trek to, they might be doing themselves a disservice as the impoundment does offer quality sport. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the impoundment with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) biologists Bill Kittrell and Tom Hampton of the Marion office. Hampton describes Flannagan as being similar to another state highland reservoir, Lake Moomaw, in terms of both featuring heavily wooded steep shorelines, deep clear water, narrow coves, predominantly rocky points and few flats.

However, the biologist notes that at Flannagan, those respective features seem to be steeper, clearer and narrower. In short, this riverine reservoir is indeed a classic highland lake, but unlike any other one in the state because of its rugged topography.

The Major Fishery

Hampton reveals that the most popular sport fishery at the lake is the black bass one with a 2003 sur-

Nestled in
Dickenson County
John W. Flannagan
Reservoir is a highland
mountain
fishing adventure
you don't want to miss.



Above: The Flannagan Marina is a focal point at the lake. Current fishing information and bait and tackle is available.

Top right: The shoreline at Flannagan Reservoir is heavily wooded, which adds to its aesthetic appeal and beauty.

Bottom right: Anglers will find deep coves, beautiful rock formations and lots of underwater structure.

vey indicating that some 60 percent or more of the fishermen come for the largemouths and smallmouths. Both species dwell throughout the lake with largemouths predominating, with the bronzebacks having their greatest presence in the Pound River arm and main lake area.

"There are only three lakes in Southwest Virginia that are over 1,000 acres: South Holston, Claytor and Flannagan," says Kittrell. "And for the Coal Fields region, Flannagan is the only major reservoir, although there are some small ones. That's an important reason why the lake is so popular with local bass clubs and fishermen."

"But Flannagan is not an easy lake to fish. Water visibility is often 15 to 20 feet at the lower end, so day-time fishing can be quite difficult from late spring through early fall."

Hampton agrees and notes that difficulty has resulted in two things

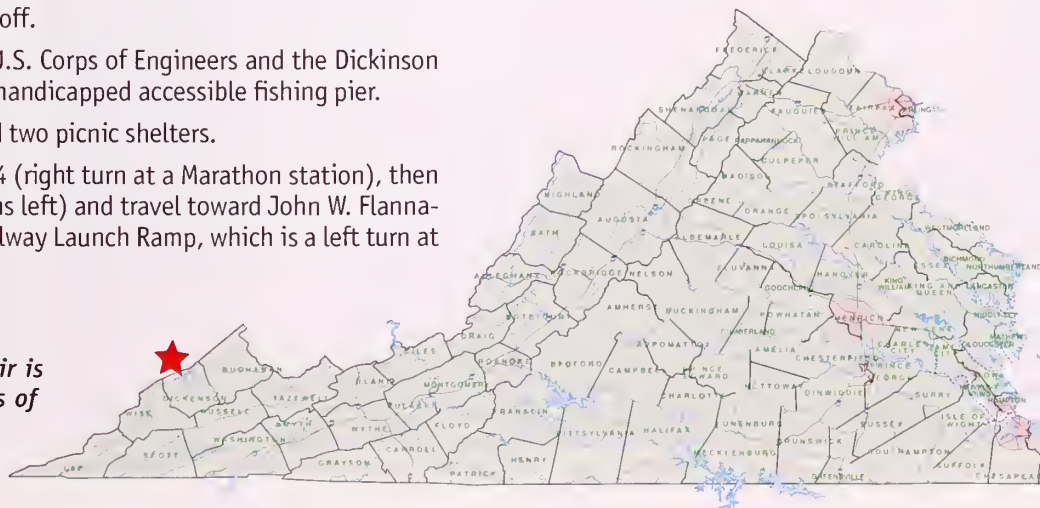




Flannagan Facts

- ◆ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the damming of the Pound and Cranesnest rivers in 1964. Primary purposes for the lake are flood control, pollution abatement, fish and wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation.
- ◆ Flannagan is very much a clear water, highland reservoir with a maximum depth of 166 feet and an average one of 58.
- ◆ VDGIF biologist Bill Kittrell describes Flannagan as having a “wishbone appearance.” The lake is indeed V-shaped with the two rivers forming arms that run for miles and with the bottom of the V being very short and squat.
- ◆ The reservoir hosts largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, hybrid striped bass, channel catfish, flathead catfish, crappie, bluegill, rock bass, carp and musky. Alewives and gizzard shad provide forage.
- ◆ DGIF annually stocks some 114,300 walleyes and 17,145 hybrid striped bass fingerlings.
- ◆ Flannagan and South Holston reservoirs are the only 1,000-acre plus bodies of water in the state with a minimum size limit on crappie—10 inches.
- ◆ During the fall, this U.S. Corps of Engineers lake is lowered 16 feet to hold additional water from winter and spring runoff.
- ◆ DGIF partnered with local staff of the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors to build a handicapped accessible fishing pier.
- ◆ The Corps operates three campsites and two picnic shelters.
- ◆ From Haysi, take Route 63 to Route 614 (right turn at a Marathon station), then take Route 739 (straight when 614 turns left) and travel toward John W. Flannagan Dam. The pier is located at the Spillway Launch Ramp, which is a left turn at the tennis courts.

John W. Flannagan Dam and Reservoir is located in the Cumberland Mountains of Dickinson County.



coming about: finesse fishing for black bass is the norm and night fishing is a requisite throughout much of the warm water period.

“There’s a local saying that ‘if you can catch bass at Flannagan, you can catch them anywhere,’” says Hampton. “When you have conquered Flannagan, you have a master’s degree in bass fishing. Fellows who do well here are often successful when they visit other lakes. A good example of this would be Dr. Greg South and his father Jimmy. Greg did well on the B.A.S.S. tour when he used to fish it.”

Alewives are a major forage, and they are more active at night, so that’s another reason to fish the lake then. That venerable nighttime bait, the jig and pig, is another Flannagan standby as is a buzzbait. A popular daytime tactic is to rig a bogus crawler “trick worm” style and to let it drift slowly downward, giving the bogus bait periodic twitches.

Interestingly, Hampton reveals that some local bass anglers concentrate on smallmouths.

“They work micro habitats, sort of a spot on a spot,” he says. “From many hours of fishing the lake, these anglers have used sonar and visual orientation to locate precise areas.”

Other Gamefish

Individual Virginia anglers can make a difference, and this truism certainly holds true on Flannagan.

“About 10 years ago, we received a call from Paul Coleman of Buchanan County, and he was very concerned about the decline in the



walleye fishery," says Hampton. "Mr. Coleman keeps detailed records of his fishing trips, and he reported that those records showed that he was catching fewer and fewer walleyes.

"His catch rate decline corresponded with a change in our stocking routine when we went from stocking every year to every other year and at a reduced rate as well. So the Department changed to stocking walleyes every year and at an increased rate. Now, the walleye fishery is much improved, and it has become very popular with a number of local anglers who have learned how to fish for them."

Kittrell adds that an angling survey showed that there was very little interest among anglers in going after the lake's stocked trout—just one percent of the fishermen were doing so. So the department stopped releasing trout.

"Flannagan is the lake resource

for this area," continues Kittrell. "So it is very important that we give the people as much as we can. That's one of the reasons why we started stocking hybrid stripers here. We don't stock hybrid stripers in our lakes that are part of the Chesapeake Bay drainage because of a concern for the native striped bass fishery there.

"The department does stock hybrid stripers in Flannagan and Claytor because those lakes are part of the Ohio drainage which flows to the Gulf of Mexico."

A panfish that has its followers at Flannagan is the black crappie. The Department, with assistance from the Dickinson County Bass Club, has worked to improve lake habitat by sinking brush and fish shelters and by felling hinge trees (cutting a shoreline tree so that it falls into the water but remains attached to the bank). Once again local angler input was helpful as Kenny Mullins of the Dickinson club suggested habitat im-



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Local Folks

While we were at Flannagan, I was able to talk to several local anglers. Rose Mullins and her husband Mike operate the Flannagan Marina. Rose relates that her two favorite species to angle for are crappie and bluegill, although she admits to enjoying night fishing for hybrid stripers.

I also met two Flannagan regulars, brothers Jack and Harold Rose of Haysi and Clintwood, respectively. Both men rate bass and walleye as their favorite gamefish at the lake, but the brothers also relish the challenge of dueling with hybrid stripers. Jack recommends topwater stickbaits for the hybrids and confides that he has landed ones close to 10 pounds. He also offered a succinct answer when I asked him what was his favorite thing about Flannagan.

"It's close to home," Rose said.

Kittrell says that sentiment is common among anglers not only at Flannagan but also statewide, as angler surveys indicate that about 75 percent of the fishing pressure comes

from folks living within 30 miles of a body of water. As I left the lake and began the four-hour drive back to my home in Botetourt County, I knew, like most Virginia anglers, that the distance is such that I will never be able to visit this highland reservoir often. Nevertheless, this lake near the border of Kentucky is very much worth an excursion to. □

Bruce Ingram is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife and the author of The James River Guide and The Shenandoah/Rappahannock Rivers Guide.

Numbers to Know

- VDGIF Marion office - (276) 783-4860.
- Local U.S. Corps of Engineers office - (276) 835-9544. Maps of Flannagan are available from that number or online at www.lrh.usace.army.mil/projects/lakes/jwf.
- Flannagan Marina - (276) 835-8408. Marina is open from April 1 through October 31.

provement activities. The Department has also planted black willows and bald cypress in wetland areas.

"I think the Department and the lake has really benefited from angler feedback," confirms Kittrell.

Both biologists note that enthusiasm for bluegill fishing has come to center stage at the highland reservoir. The two most commonly sought after sunfish are bluegills and redear. Also, a hybrid sunfish, the Georgia Giant, mysteriously appeared in the lake and fish in the 3 pound range have been registered for citations.

With its cold, clear water Flannagan Reservoir is indicative of a high mountain lake. It has had a long reputation of offering a variety of good fishing opportunities, including sunfish, bass and crappie. Walleye are also stocked regularly making it an excellent location to test your angling skills for this prized game fish.

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Black-capped Chickadee

story and illustrations
by Spike Knuth

During the shorter, colder days of winter, the fields, forests and our backyards are quieter. There aren't as many birds around. Most have moved south months ago and a quiet has descended on the land. No territorial songs, and no nesting or brooding activity. But there are a few small birds that brave the cold and are with us all through the winter. They are well adapted to living in the cold of winter and can make our days a bit brighter if we watch for them or even attract them to our yards by putting out feeders full of black oilseed sunflower seeds and suet. Included among them are the chickadees, titmice, nuthatches and creepers.

The Chickadees

Chickadees are curious, bold, active birds, full of energy. Even during the bleakest of winter weather, the little chickadees move about seemingly unconcerned about the cold and wind. These little feathered dynamos are synonymous with cheerfulness and motion. They will commonly

Small Winter Birds

come down close to a person walking in the woods or yard, flitting just out of reach, cocking their heads carefully studying the "intruder" with sparkling little black eyes, often uttering a challenging "chick-a-dee-dee-dee."

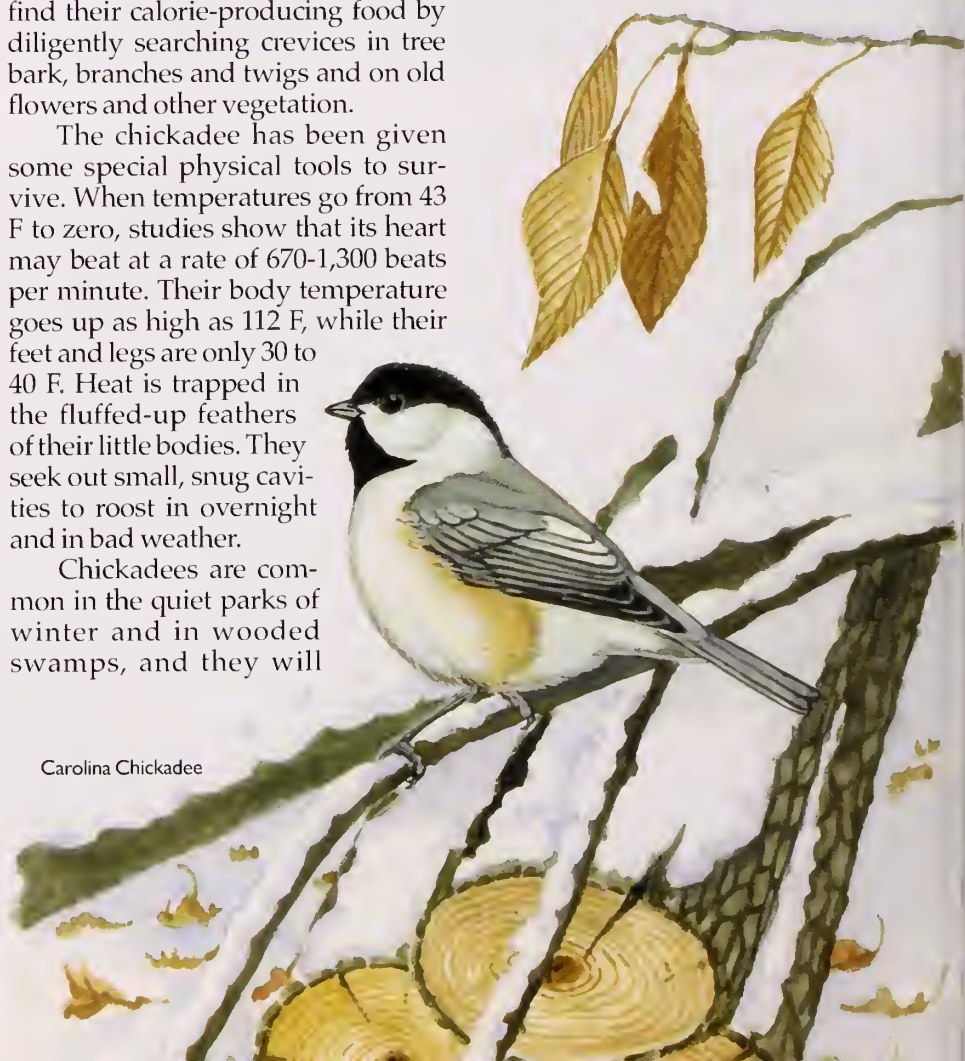
Despite this seemingly happy countenance they are going about serious business. To withstand cold weather, the little chickadee must eat constantly. At this time they feed mainly on hibernating insects, insect pupae and insect eggs. Maybe some leftover dried and frozen berries and a variety of small seeds are included in their diet. They find their calorie-producing food by diligently searching crevices in tree bark, branches and twigs and on old flowers and other vegetation.

The chickadee has been given some special physical tools to survive. When temperatures go from 43 F to zero, studies show that its heart may beat at a rate of 670-1,300 beats per minute. Their body temperature goes up as high as 112 F, while their feet and legs are only 30 to 40 F. Heat is trapped in the fluffed-up feathers of their little bodies. They seek out small, snug cavities to roost in overnight and in bad weather.

Chickadees are common in the quiet parks of winter and in wooded swamps, and they will

regularly come to residential areas to feed on sunflower seeds and suet. They'll fly to the feeder, quickly grab a seed and fly off to a nearby safe perch in a shrub or tree. Here they hold the seed between their feet and hammer it open with their bill to get at the seed meat. They will make trip after trip taking but a second or two to "grab and go."

There are two species of chickadees in Virginia. The black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) is a more northerly species, roughly along the old Mason-Dixon Line, but they do move over that line in winter.



Carolina Chickadee

rd Friends

There is also a breeding population in the Appalachians south to North Carolina and other mountain areas above 1,800 feet in winter, 3,600 feet in summer. They measure about 5½ inches with larger heads and longer tails than the Carolina chickadee.

The smaller Carolina chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*) are about 4¾ inches and are more common in the lower elevations, especially the southeastern Virginia pine woods. They both utter the “chick-a-dee-dee-dee” call, but the Carolina’s is higher pitched and faster; almost “scratchy” at times. The black-capped also has a slower “dee-dee” call, and their songs are “fee-bee” while the Carolina’s is “fee-bee, fee-bay.”

They can be very difficult to tell apart other than size and call, although the black-capped shows whiter on the broad outer edges of its greater wing coverts, while the Carolina’s appear gray. Also the black bib or throat patch of the Carolina shows a neat edge where it meets the grayish-white breast, while the black-capped shows a ragged edge. But even these field marks are not dependable since there is some hybridization, and when traveling together they may take on the characteristics of each other.

Tufted Titmouse

The tufted titmouse (*Baeolophus bicolor*) is another bird that will com-

monly come to your backyard feeder in winter. This is the little, grayish bird with the crest. Its upper parts are a light slate gray, with lighter gray underparts, sometimes with a rusty wash on its flanks. The titmouse has a dark eye that stands out on its light gray face, giving it a mousy appearance, and it has a dark, almost black forehead. It measures about 6 inches long and has a short black bill.

Its song is commonly heard high in a tree—described as “peeta peeta peeta,” and it also makes chickadee-like noises—scratchy, scolding calls. Actually it’s a close relative of the chickadee being in the family “os-cines,” and acts very much the same.

They feed on insect eggs, insects, insect larvae, small seeds and nuts, and hibernating insects in winter. While mainly a bird of the woodlands, especially bottomlands during breeding, they will inhabit suitable habitat in residential areas as well. They will spend all winter with us and commonly come to the feeder to sample sunflower seeds, especially earlier in the winter. Titmice have been spreading their range northward in recent decades.



White-breasted Nuthatch

White-breasted Nuthatch

The white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*) is another of our occasional visitors to the backyard bird feeder during the cold weather. Often called the “upside down bird,” it is one of three nuthatches that hang upside down on the tree, moving quickly downward and around the trunk in jerking motions. It has the black crown and nape, bluish-gray upper parts and is white underneath. Sometimes you can see a rusty wash on its flanks and under tail coverts. It measures about 6 inches or a little less.

Be Wild! Live Wild! Grow Wild!



Tufted Titmouse

It is really a distinctive and striking bird when you first see it, with a slightly upturned bill and tear-shaped eyes angling upward at the back. Its flight is roller coaster-like, similar to woodpeckers.

Normally they stay in the woodlands, but like a lot of other winter birds, they may show up in places where they aren't normally seen. At this time, they naturally feed on insect eggs, larvae and hibernating insects. They will come to the feeder to get sunflower seeds, either hammering them open in woodpecker fashion, or will carry them to a tree and jam them into crevices or bark for later use. They are also attracted to suet.

Their call is easily recognized—a nasal “yank-yank”—that is often heard on those cold, quiet winter days in the woods.

Red-Breasted Nuthatch

The red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) is primarily a bird of the northern evergreen forests of spruce, fir, hemlock, balsam and cedar. Here it can be seen high in the treetops feeding on the seeds of these conifers, or working quickly and carefully around branches looking for insects and larvae.

er-pitched. It is best described as a nasal “ahnk” or “auk-auk-auk.” It actively moves along tree trunks usually downward but sometimes around and under a branch. Its flight is bounding or undulating, as it flies short distances from tree to tree.

In addition to the various conifer and other seeds, they also feed on beetles, wood borers, plant lice, scale insects, caterpillars and spiders. While they prefer coniferous forests, those birds that range over the eastern United States are tolerant of mixed forest habitats.

In the past, the red-breasted nuthatch would have been thought of as an unexpected guest. Like other birds of the boreal forests, they would be occasionally forced southward due to food shortages or severe weather. These “irruptions” still occur, however, and in recent decades, they have expanded their range southward, especially in southern Canada and southeastern United States.

Now there is a good chance that the little nuthatch with the striped head will visit your backyard feeder. They favor black oilseed sunflower, suet or nutmeats. Actually they can be quite bold and almost tame. They will frequently take the seed and stash it in the crevices of tree bark for use later.



Brown-headed Nuthatch

Brown-headed Nuthatch

Of the three nuthatches found in Virginia, the brown-headed nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) is smallest, measuring $3\frac{3}{4}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The brown-headed nuthatch has similar habits as its red-breasted and white-breasted cousins, but is decidedly smaller with a seemingly oversized head and shorter tail. Its upper parts are grayish-blue, its undersides white to dusky white, and the top of its head brown, darker through the eyes as a mask, with a white nape spot. Its bill is fairly large, sharp and appears up-turned. It has long, sharp claws on its toes for climbing around and down tree branches and trunks in typical upside down nuthatch fashion.

It's a bird of the Pine Barrens and forests of the Southeastern Coastal Plain. Occasionally it will be found in cypress and scrub oak stands. Loblolly-short leaf pine or long leaf-slash pine stands seem to be favored and rarely is it found away from pinewoods habitat. It shares the same type of habitat as the red-cockaded woodpecker and needs open mature pine forests with dead snags for nesting and roosting. Like the red-cockaded, its range in Virginia is generally confined to the southeastern corner of the state, although it has been seen as far west as Smith Mountain Lake.

Like its cousins, its call is nasal but harsher. It utters what is often described as a piping, double noted call repeatedly and it also makes a variety of chirping, twittering and chattering noises.

They feed on insects, insect eggs, leaf beetles, wood borers, ants, scale insects, spiders and pine seeds. They will come to bird feeders for sunflower seeds. Being non-migratory they will seek out cavities or nest boxes and houses to roost in at night, often a number of them together. According to studies their populations

Red-breasted Nuthatch

have declined 45 percent over the last 35 or so years, mainly due to alteration of their specialized habitat by human activity.

Brown Creeper

The brown creeper (*Certhia americana*) or tree creeper, is common but not numerous, and inconspicuous.

That is if you're looking for them, you may see them regularly, but usually just one by itself in winter.

It's a small, slim, stiff-tailed little bird with a slender, slightly curved bill. It is basically brown, streaked with buff or gray above, fading to grayish-brown on its lower back and



Brown Creeper

russet brown on its rump. Its tail is dark brown. Its undersides are whitish and it has a dull white stripe over its eye. It shows a buffy wing stripe in flight.

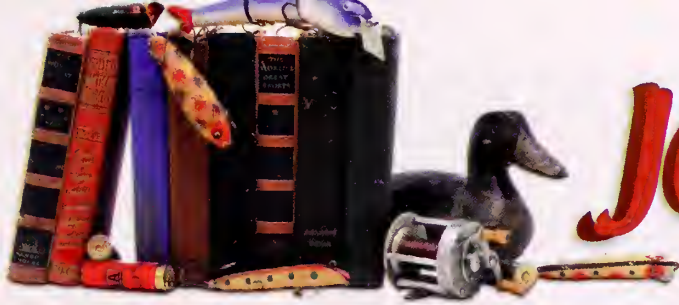
Just the opposite of the nuthatches, brown creepers "creep" up a tree trunk, spiraling around it as it goes—then will fly off and drop down to the base of another tree to repeat the process. They feed on tiny insects, insect eggs and pupas, using their curved bills to probe under bark and in crevices. Their call is a faint lisping and their song is a long, thin, high-pitched, rolling trill-like hissing sound.

They favor mature forests and wooded swamps with an abundance of dead trees with loose bark. They build nests in pockets of the loose bark.

In winter, all of these birds become gregarious. Chickadees, nuthatches, titmice and brown creepers, join up with kinglets, downy woodpeckers and occasionally bluebirds, red-bellied woodpeckers and even yellow-rumped warblers as they forage through the woodlands of cedars, pines, hemlock, sweet gum and oak as well as hedgerows. □

Spike Knuth is an avid naturalist and wildlife artist. For over 30 years his artwork and writing have appeared in Virginia Wildlife. Spike is also a member of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association Inc.

Be Wild! Live Wild! Grow Wild! is a regular feature that highlights Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan, which is designed to unite natural resources agencies, sportsmen and women, conservationists and citizens in a common vision for the conservation of the Commonwealth's wildlife and habitats in which they live. To learn more or to become involved with this new program visit: bewildvirginia.org.



Journal

2008 Outdoor Calendar of Events

January 5: Hunting seasons close for bear, deer and turkey.

January 14: *Educational Waterfowl Workshop for Women*, Essex County. For more information call 804-367-0656 or visit the Department's Web site.

April 5: *Kid's Day Trout Fishing*, Graves Mountain Lodge. Starts 9:00 a.m. For more information, call 540-923-4231. □



by Beth Hester

Bird: The Definitive Visual Guide
Produced in collaboration with
Audubon

Contributors: David Burnie and
BirdLife International
DK Publishing; 2007
www.dk.com
Hardcover; with audio CD

When similar birds share the same habitat, they often evolve over many generations so that they exploit different types of food. There exists a type of kingfisher that is only 4.5 inches in length. Though often aggressive, crows are one of the few birds known to actively engage in "playful" behavior. The life expectancy of the American kestrel in the wild is generally between 2-5 years.

How do I know these avian factoids? I discovered them between the ample pages of *Bird: The Definitive Visual Guide*.

At a hefty 10"x12," this isn't the type of field guide you'd tuck into your day pack...but it's the volume you'll want to refer to again and again. Crammed with a host of features, *Bird* describes and illustrates over 1,400 species, with vibrant, full-color photographs, and most of the birds are shown in relation to their natural surroundings. Also included are overviews of preserves and some of the world's most productive bird-watching sites.

The companion CD contains 60 bird songs and calls, and each track is identified by species name, followed by the page number on which the bird is profiled in the Species section.

Wildlife enthusiasts, and citizen-scientists will appreciate two of the book's special, color-coded features:

- An in-depth introduction highlights topics such as wing-structure, flight patterns, habitat loss and migration.
- A 28-page section on habitat covers grasslands, coniferous forests, scrublands and wetland environments

So if you want to know how the California condor was saved from extinction, or are curious to see a photo of a great crested grebe having a bad hair day, get yourself a copy of *Bird: The Definitive Visual Guide*. Leafing through its colorful pages could easily become a new and enlightening addiction. □

Readers Comments

Werowocomoco

My husband and I look forward to receiving our monthly subscription to *Virginia Wildlife*. We were pleasantly surprised and pleased to see the article written by Tee Clarkson with photographs by Dwight Dyke, entitled "Finding the Way to

Werowocomoco." Having been there this summer, with a convoy of Archeological Society of Virginia Executive Board members and Chapter Presidents, I can honestly say the article was entitled appropriately.

In Virginia, October is Archaeology Month and November is Native American month. Therefore this article was timed perfectly to honor both and to commemorate Virginia's 400th anniversary! But best of all, this article is bringing a very important part of Virginia history into the homes of a reading public that may have never thought about the archaeological significance of the lands upon which they hunt and fish.

I will be bringing this article to the attention of the members of the Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV). I also cordially invite any of the readers of *Virginia Wildlife* magazine who are interested in archaeology to attend one of the many chapters of the ASV that meet throughout the state of Virginia every month. For more information about the Archeological Society of Virginia or how to become a member visit; <http://asv-archeology.org> or write to Archeological Society of Virginia, P.O. Box 70395, Richmond, VA 23255-0395.

Teresa B. Preston
ASV Nansemond Chapter President
Ivor, VA 23866

Right on Target

As the hunting season wraps up, a lot of folks have been curious to know if hunters are having much success hunting with crossbows. Well, for one lucky hunter the decision to give crossbow hunting a try really paid off. The following account was sent to us by Brian Morrison, of Louisa County, and is just one of the testimonials to the growing popularity of hunting with a crossbow.



Thanks to the growing popularity of hunting with a crossbow, Brian Morrison of Louisa County, managed to get a great start to the 2007-2008 hunting season.

Well, I was just trying to find a large doe to put meat in the freezer. I decided to pass on young bucks and young does and was fortunate enough to pass on about nine deer in two outings. Hunting, especially from a tree, with a crossbow has advantages and disadvantages. It is not like shooting a rifle. For instance, I find a crossbow more difficult to shoot than my bow in some instances. Also, the bolts lose energy faster than the 30" arrows that I shoot and follow up shots take longer. Crossbows don't handle as well as a bow; they are a bit more ungainly. Also, if you don't pay attention, there's a slight chance you could trim the tops of your fingers off when shooting.

That aside, at 0800, Thursday, a 3 pointer appears feeding at about 50 yards.

I'm about 24 feet up a tree and snugged in tight by my safety harness. I've seen him before, and he's a passer by. Twenty minutes later, an estimated 2½ year-old appears, 8 to 9 points, decent rack; a keeper. He commences feeding with the 3 pointer. There are, and have been no does in sight. In about 10 minutes, something big approaches the two bucks. Due to the leaves on the trees, I can't tell what it is other than large, based

on my sighting of one of his antler beams, which looks really heavy. The 2½ year-old defers to the large one, and they all keep feeding—kind of odd with the rut being so close, or supposedly in session. They start to drift away while feeding, so I give a doe bleat.

While they find it interesting, they don't seem to care. Maybe it's my bleating skill. I then give a single grunt. That seemed to get the middle (8-9 point) buck's attention, and he starts to walk and look, passing at 25 yards. I let him pass by, waiting to see what the big guy is going to do. I haven't gotten a good look at him yet. He starts to follow the 8-9 pointer.

Geez, what a monster. He clearly outweighs the 2½ year-old by 30-40 pounds. No wonder they got along so well, it was no contest. He passes by right at the edge of my range of comfort (based on my crossbow experience, and personal bow hunting rules), which I estimated at about 27 yards. I shot, while he was walking, using my 27 yard graduation on my sight. Ka-thunk. It appears to be a good hit, but he trots 30 yards and stops, body obscured, head partially visible, just looking around. This causes me some consternation, doubting the placement of the shot. The 8-9 pointer stands 25 yards in front of me, just milling about. In about 30 seconds, the big boy is on the move, two steps forward, one step back, one step sideways, and down he goes.

He was about 170-180 pounds (live weight), with a very heavy 8 point rack.

My estimates were backed up at the check station and with the game processor. He was the biggest deer that I've ever taken. A buddy of mine who checked him commented on the sheer size of the beast. The bolt entered the chest, clipped the bottom of the heart, exited, passed through the opposite front leg, and kept on going. The shot distance was 32 yards by laser rangefinder. The shot hit 2-3 inches below ideal, but still (obviously) "right on target." □

Virginia Bowhunters Association Promotes New Youth Archery Program

The Virginia Bowhunters Association (VBA) is sponsoring the newly developed After School Archery Program (ASAP). ASAP is a program to provide follow-on archery instruction to youth introduced to the sport at summer camps, National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), and other beginning archery programs. The program was started by National Field Archery Association (NFAA) to be presented in community environments such as schools, recreation councils, park programs and clubs; and to take beginning archers to a level that will enable them to fully participate in the sport by competing at local shoots and joining archery clubs. It was also intended to enable archery instructors to receive some income for their efforts. ASAP is also supported by national archery and trade associations and the Easton Sports Development Foundation that have provided grants of equipment for use in the program.

VBA has received one of those grants of equipment, including bows, arrows, targets and accessories, for use by ASAP participants. Jerry Wenzel, a NFAA Master Coach and a member of Manahoac Bowmen in Fredericksburg, has accepted the responsibility as the ASAP Coordinator for the VBA. The equipment is available to any instructor who

wishes to present an ASAP session and will take responsibility for the equipment. The program may be presented by any instructor certified by the USA Archery, NFAA or NASP, and is particularly suited for Intermediate Level and higher level instructors.

For information on how you may participate contact Jerry Wenzel at (540) 854-0245 or email at mand-jw@mindspring.com. For information about the VBA, visit www.geocities.com/~vbarchers. □

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Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program

Celebrate Virginia's Nongame Wildlife Program by helping to support essential research and management of Virginia's native birds, fish and other nongame animals.

If you are due a tax refund from the Commonwealth of Virginia, you can contribute to the Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program by simply marking the appropriate place on this year's tax check-off, on the Virginia State Income Tax Form.

If you would like to make a cash donation directly to the Virginia Nongame Wildlife Program using a VISA or MasterCard, you can visit the Department's Web site or mail a check made out to: Virginia Nongame Program and mail it to Virginia Nongame Program, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 22230-1104.

Remember, this is the year that you can make a difference by helping to support the management of Virginia's wildlife.

Nongame Tax Checkoff Fund

Answers to the December 2007 "Byrd Nest" Crossword Puzzle

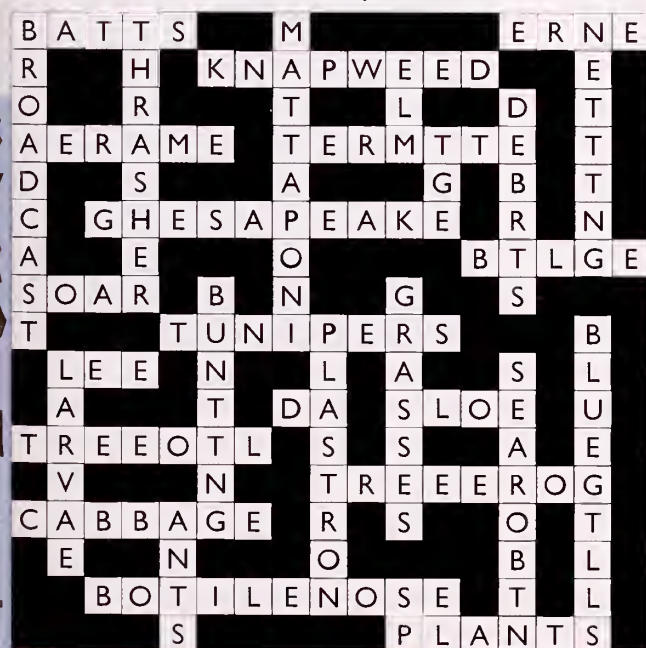


Photo Tips

by Lynda Richardson

Be A Wildlife Detective

It was so quiet in the forest that I could hear my heart beat. The early morning snow had covered the trees, strong limbs straining under the weight, drooping downward. As I trudged along the cold path, I continued searching for clues.

Soon, the meadow came into view and I scanned the edges, watching, listening. Was there something out there? After looking around the landscape near and far, the next thing I did was to look down at my feet. There, I discovered deer tracks so fresh that the edges of the tracks were very well defined and only a little snow had fallen back into them yet. Ahhh, my quarry was near.

Very slowly, I continued to walk looking ahead for the deer and down at the ground in the direction the tracks were leading. Soon, I spotted 20 to 30 dark brown cylindrical pellets scattered on the snow with the tracks. This was fresh deer poop also known as scat. I kept walking and spotted where the deer had eaten some vegetation. Tiny bits of bark and leaves were sprinkled on the snow and I could see where a low hanging tree branch had been nibbled. Cool!

Looking up from my discovery, I spotted a shadowy figure further down the trail. The large buck watched me for a moment before giving a snort, throwing up the white fluff of his tail, and taking off into the trees. That's OK. I was very happy to get even just a quick look at him.

One of my favorite pastimes is to play "Wildlife Detective." I walk through marshes, forests, along rivers and creeks, looking for tracks, scat, left over meals, holes in trees, burrows and scrapings trying to piece together the daily activities of wild creatures. Even if you don't get to see the animal itself, you do get an interesting glimpse into its life.

There are many books that can help you become a wildlife detective. Here are some that I own.



A wildlife detective is always on the prowl for tracks and other wildlife signs. This bear track was found near Madison Heights, Virginia.

Tom Brown's Field Guide to Nature Observation and Tracking, Tom Brown, Jr., Berkley Books, NY, 1983 (He has loads of tracking books!)

Tracking & the Art of Seeing; How to Read Animal Tracks & Sign, Paul Rezendes, Camden House, VT, 1993

Stokes Nature Guides, A Guide to Animal Tracking and Behavior, Donald & Lillian Stokes, Little Brown and Company, MA, 1986

A Field Guide to Mammal Tracking in North America, James Halfpenny, Johnson Publishing Company, CO, 1986

The next time you are out in the natural world, be your own wildlife detective! Be quiet, move slow, look around, and don't forget to look down at your feet. □

You are invited to submit one of your best images to "Image of the Month," Virginia Wildlife Magazine, P.O. Box 11104, (4010 West Broad Street), Richmond, VA, 23230-1104. Send original slides, high quality prints, or high res jpeg files on disk and include a self addressed, stamped envelope or other shipping method for return. Also, please include any pertinent information regarding how and where the image was captured, what camera, film and settings you used. I hope to see your image as our next, "Image of the Month!"

Image of the Month



Congratulations to wildlife detective Richard deButts, of Charlottesville, for his photograph of a bobcat tree scraping. This seldom seen wildlife clue was photographed near Howardsville in Albemarle County. Richard was using a Canon PowerShot SD 400 digital camera. Since his image inspired this month's column on animal signs, we decided it would be the perfect "Image of the Month." Good spotting Richard!

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Tasty Trout Tips for Better Cooking Results

Do Not Scale Trout. Removal of the tiny scales also removes the thin coat of natural jelly around the scales that allows trout to be breaded without using any type of liquid.

Be Careful of Frying Fats. The flavors in fats can be transferred to the taste of the trout. The best fats include butter, hydrogenated shortening, peanut or corn oils.

Watch Temperatures. Trout fried at a low temperature absorb too much fat. The ideal temperature is 325° to 350° F.

Do Not Overcook. Trout should be moist and fork-tender. Overcooking dries out and toughens the fish. A trout is done when it flakes easily when probed with a fork.

Menu

Baked Potato Soup

Gourmet Trout

Winter Fruit Salad

Extra Moist Fudge Cake

Baked Potato Soup

¼ cup (4 tablespoons) butter

¼ cup chopped onion

¼ cup flour

1 can (14.5 ounces) chicken broth

1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk

2 large or 3 medium baking potatoes,
baked or microwaved

Toppings: cooked crumbled bacon or shredded cheddar cheese

Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 1 to 2 minutes or until tender. Stir in flour. Gradually stir in broth and evaporated milk. Scoop potato pulp from 1 potato (reserve potato skin) and mash. Add pulp to broth mixture. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture comes just to a boil. Dice remaining potato skin and potato(es); add to soup. Heat through and spoon into bowls. Sprinkle each with toppings. Makes 4 servings.

Gourmet Trout

4 trout (6 to 8 ounces each)

Salt and pepper to taste

Flour

6 tablespoons butter

1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms

½ cup chopped green onions

4 teaspoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons vermouth

Thaw trout if frozen. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Coat with flour. Melt 4 tablespoons butter in large skillet and fry trout for 3 to 4 minutes on each side. Remove to platter and keep warm. Add remaining butter to skillet. Sauté mushrooms and green onions until tender. Stir in lemon juice and vermouth. Pour over trout. Serves 4.

Winter Fruit Salad

3 navel oranges, coarsely chopped

2¾ cups red delicious apple, unpeeled, coarsely
chopped

¼ cup red wine vinegar

1½ tablespoons brown sugar

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

2 teaspoons low-sodium soy sauce

1 teaspoon curry powder

5 cups loosely packed torn red leaf lettuce

2 tablespoons chopped almonds, toasted

Combine vinegar and next 4 ingredients; stir with a wire whisk until well blended. Set aside. Combine lettuce, apple and orange in a large bowl and toss gently. Add vinegar mixture, tossing gently to coat. Sprinkle with almonds. Makes 8 servings.

Extra Moist Fudge Cake

After taking Joan and Fred Adair of Williamsburg some of our fresh figs, Joan made this super delicious cake for our family.

1 box Duncan Hines Moist Deluxe Devils Food Mix or

Moist Deluxe Dark Chocolate Fudge Cake Mix

1 can (21 ounces) cherry pie filling

2 eggs

1 teaspoon almond extract

In a mixing bowl, beat cherry pie filling until all broken up. Add cake mix, eggs and almond extract. Mix for 2 minutes. Pour into a well-greased and floured 9 x 13-inch baking pan or a greased bundt pan. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake in a 350° F. oven for 40 to 45 minutes or a bit longer for a bundt pan.

Chocolate Glaze

1 cup sugar

⅓ cup milk

½ stick butter

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

In saucepan combine sugar, milk and butter. Bring to a boil and continue cooking for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in chocolate chips. When chips are melted, pour glaze over warm cake. This cake will stay fresh and moist for a week. □

On The Water

by Jim Crosby



Boating in Cold Weather

The fair weather fleet is gone and the water is now all ours—the truly dedicated boaters and fishermen. Winter boating at this latitude can be great fun because you have the water all to yourself except for a few other hardy souls. But along with all this winter boating fun comes some special hazards.

According to U.S. Coast Guard boating fatality statistics, the cold weather of January and February present the greatest fatality risk. Always check the weather before you go. With hypothermia a very real threat, sudden squalls or a simple fall overboard can be deadly.

First, and foremost, we must remember with the pleasure boating season over there are fewer potential rescuers out there to assist you in an emergency, so never boat/fish alone. Leave a float plan behind with your spouse, friend or anyone who is willing to call authorities if you haven't checked back in before a predetermined time.

Wear layers of clothing—preferably synthetic or wool—but never cotton. It's a poor insulator when wet.

Always take along high-energy foods such as granola bars and warm drinks. It's important to keep hydrated in winter's dry air. Stay away from alcohol, which dilates blood vessels and cools your body's core.

Cold water drains energy and body heat rapidly. If you fall overboard, a life jacket can give you the time you need to pull yourself back in the boat before the effects of hypothermia set in. Vest styles provide warmth both in and out of the water. Also, make sure you have a method to get back in the boat, such as a built-

in boarding ladder or a short length of rope with loops for footholds that is firmly attached to a cleat or other fixed object. An old-time safety measure is to drag a line off the stern so if you miss grabbing the gunwale or some part of the boat, you have a second chance of getting back to the boat by grabbing the dragline as it passes by.

BoatU.S. Angler offers some special tips for trailer boat anglers fishing in the winter months that are worth passing on.

They suggest, "Check the bellies of fish you bring up and if you find silt, that's an indication that the fish has been glued to the bottom. So take your time presenting the bait or lure, stay in one spot for a longer time and use presentations with smaller baits like drop shot or shaky heads. Find the deepest water close to shore and fish more vertically than horizontally."

They also suggest "A spray of line conditioner, such as Reel Magic, will help keep your lines ice-free. Use a smaller line size so you can get better hook sets with less line resistance. Low stretch line is best in the winter as well.

"Use attractants such as Jack's Juice, which can be sprayed on soft plastic lures. Fish are sluggish and attractants encourage them to hold on longer."

And lastly, BoatU.S. suggests, "When you're done fishing and before you leave the launch ramp, trim the outboard motor all the way down, remove the kill switch and turn the engine over for just a second to pump out any water that may still be inside the motor. Remove any mud or plant debris from the boat or

equipment and thoroughly drain live wells or anywhere else water may have pooled to stop the spread of invasive species. Storing the boat high and dry for two days before fishing a different body of water can also help. Remember, it's your fishery.

BoatU.S. Angler is a program of the nation's largest association of recreational boaters whose mission is to protect the interests of boat owners, increase boating safety, provide consumer assistance and ensure fishing remains worry-free. Their Web site has a wealth of information and the address is: <http://www.BoatUSAngler.com>. □

Author's Note: I always welcome feedback, input and/or suggestions from readers. My email address is: jecrosby@comcast.net



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Be A Collector!



2007 Limited Edition Virginia Wildlife Collector's Knife

Our 2007 Collector's knife has been customized by Buck Knives. This classic model 110 folding knife is 8 1/2" long when fully opened and has a distinctive, natural woodgrain handle with gold lettering. Each knife is individually serial numbered and has a mirror polished blade engraved with a fox. Our custom knife comes in a solid cherry box with a collage of foxes engraved on the box cover.

Item #VW 407

\$90.00 each (plus \$7.25 S&H)



2006 Virginia Wildlife Collector's Knife

This year's knife has been customized for us by Buck Knives. Each knife is individually serial numbered, and comes with a distinctive rosewood handle and gold lettering. This year's knife also includes two white-tailed deer etched on the blade. This custom knife not only comes with a leather sheath, but also a custom made solid, cherry box with a decorative wildlife scene engraved on the cover.

Item #VW-406

\$85.00 each

2005 Virginia Wildlife Collector's Knife

This year's knife has been customized for us by Buck Knives and has a cut out blade of a hunter and his dog. Each knife is individually serial numbered and comes with a distinctive rosewood handle and gold lettering. This custom knife comes in a decorative solid cherry box with a hunting scene engraved on the cover.

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